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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2009

Media Highlights: Commentary Pelts Back on Israeli Ambassador Egg Protest; Sudan's Bashir to Visit Turkey; Turkish Take on Iran Demonstrations; 'Border Patrol' System for Turkey; EU Warns Turkey on Judiciary, Iran; Turkish Poems into Armenian; US Election Results Rattle

"Egg Protest Against the Israeli Ambassador" (Yeni Safak)
All Media outlets report on the Trabzon University "egg" protest against Israeli Ambassador Gaby Levy with commentators continuing to pelt Black Sea politicians for their anti-Semitic behavior. According to liberal Radikal, which provides footage of the protest on its website, about 25-30 students shouted "Child Killer Israel, Out!" at Ambassador Levy and pelted his car with eggs. Papers report Prime Minister Erdogan phoned Rize Mayor Halil Bakirci regarding the mayor's previous day's tense dialogue with the Israeli ambassador.* Bakirci is widely quoted today as saying his warnings for the Israeli ambassador had not been planned in advance. Turkish tour operators told mainstream Sabah around 400,000 Israeli tourists visited Turkey every year, of which 15,000 tour the Black Sea region, and warned that Bakirci's comments would lower the number of Israeli visitors. (*see Media Reaction, November 4, 2009)

Commentary Warns of "The Risk of Slipping Towards Anti-Semitism:" Following yesterday's negative media reaction to the Rize Mayor's behavior, mainstream Vatan columnist Okay Gonensin provides level commentary on the Trabzon protest: "It is only natural for the conservative sector in Turkey to support PM Erdogan's 'One Minute' show in Davos. The policies of Israel's radical right has always been criticized globally. Naturally, the majority of Turkish public also are opposing these policies. However, it is so easy to go over the board and pass that fine line between showing reaction and slipping towards anti-Semitism. The latest example of this is Rize AKP Mayor's harsh comments to the Israeli Ambassador. Anti-Semitism has a strong place in Turkey's political Islam traditions. While criticizing Israel's state policies, if the AKP government is not careful about the triggering effect of each mistake they make, incidents like throwing eggs to the Israeli Ambassador, will be repeated commonly."

"Go Home Beshir" - Sudanese Leader Beshir's Upcoming Visit to

Turkey

In "Knock Knock Beshir," liberal Radikal outlines ramifications from Sudanese President al-Beshir's visit to Turkey for an OIC Conference in Istanbul November 5-8. The paper notes that Beshir will visit Turkey for the third time "although an international court asked for his arrest on charges of crimes against humanity," and notes that the court's decisions are not binding in Turkey. Mainstream Vatan's columnist Gungor Mengi protests Beshir's upcoming visit in his column under the headline "Go Home Beshir." Mengi said "Beshir's visit to Turkey last year had a very negative impact in the world. The biggest advantage for Beshir in Turkey is to benefit from the AKP government's weaknesses. In order to be in the good books of the Islamic world, the AKP is increasingly contradicting with the Western world. Reuters already commented that this visit will be a test for Ankara to show its respect to the international law. Moreover, this visit will strengthen the hands of the ones accusing Turkey for committing genocide and they will say "of course, as the crow flies with crow, the two countries will understand each other well!" When Beshir wanted to go to Uganda, people of Uganda did not allow him to enter the country. Here, also, the responsibility not to allow him in belongs to the civil public. Aren't we capable of acting like the Ugandan people?"

"People Flood the Streets in Tehran" (Cumhuriyet)

All media outlets report that on the 30th anniversary of the raid on the US Tehran Embassy, Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard forces cracked down Wednesday on opposition-reformist demonstrations in Tehran, beating the protesters. Turkish TV carried video from protestors beginning in the early afternoon. In "Down with Dictators -- People Flood the Streets in Tehran,"

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leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports opposition leader Mehdi Karroubi, who was among the protesters, was also beaten. Mainstream Hurriyet reports "Moderates took to the streets in Tehran." Islamist-oriented Zaman says Iranian opposition held demonstrations on 'Student Day.' In "US Strains in Iran Again After 30 Years," Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak says thousands of protestors rallied outside the former US Embassy complex, chanting slogans such as "Death to America" and "Death to Israel." In "Double Protests in Iran," mainstream Sabah says Iranian opposition protested against President Ahmadinejad and the regime on the anniversary of the US Embassy raid. In "Two Poles in Iran," mainstream Milliyet says the conservatives' "Death to the Dictator" slogans mixed with the reformists' "Death to the US" slogans in the streets of Tehran.

Turkey to Implement 'Border Patrol' System (Aksam)

Mainstream Aksam reports Turkey, in an effort to catch up to European standards regarding border security, would deploy 50,000 "border patrols" along its borders to fight terror, drug smuggling and illegal migration. The border patrols will not be affiliated with the military or the police and will be an "independent military" force controlled by the Interior Ministry. Turkey's chief EU negotiator Egemen Bagis said an agreement would be signed with the EU on the extradition of illegal migrants, reports Aksam.

EU Warns Turkey on Judicial Reforms, Iran

Papers report European Parliament's Turkey rapporteur Ria Oomen-Ruijten warned that many problems in Turkey stemmed from the troubles in the functioning of the judiciary. Oomen-Ruijten urged the Turkish government to implement its judicial reform strategy without delay. The EU's draft report calls on Turkey to coordinate its foreign policy with the EU, to fulfill its obligations in the customs union protocol and to make active contribution to moves for solving the Cyprus issue. It also urges the Turkish parliament to approve the normalization protocols signed last month in Zurich. Mainstream Milliyet says that Ruijten criticized Turkey for deviating from the EU values in dealings with Iran, saying that "she noted Turkey had to clarify its views about Iran's nuclear program."

The European Parliament has sent a warning about Iran to Turkey, comments Milliyet whereas leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet criticizes the European Parliament for "meddling" in Turkey's ties with Iran. In a related story, papers report that addressing the French Senate on Thursday, EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn defended Turkey's EU entry bid and also stressed that the Turkish government's Kurdish

"democratic initiative" was a "noteworthy effort."

Turkish Literature to be Translated into Armenian (Zaman)
Islamist-oriented Zaman reports Armenia has applied to Turkey for the translation into Armenian of 200 poems from 15 noted Turkish poets. The translation of Turkish stories and novels will come next. The Turkish Tourism Ministry supports the project, which is to be wrapped up in 2010, says Zaman.

US Election Results Rattle the Democrats
Media interpret a democratic defeat in two states on the anniversary of Obama's triumphant election is a warning to the President. In "Election Grief to Obama on the First Anniversary," liberal Radikal notes, "Republicans presented these elections as a 'referendum on Obama's performance' who's in trouble with the economic crisis and health reforms." Mainstream Sabah headlines, "Election Shock to Obama on His First Year," and characterizes the Republican victory as "a warning shot to Democrats looking ahead to the 2010 congressional elections." Mainstream Hurriyet writes "Obama's First Election Defeat," alerting that "next year will be very difficult for Democrats." Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet pursues a pessimistic line, saying "the election results in two states are a disappointment for Obama," while the mainstream Milliyet headline reads, "Referendum Shock to Obama." The paper notes: "Republicans claim Americans gave the message that they're fed up with Obama's liberal policies."

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Upcoming events:

Q November 5: Visiting British Foreign Secretary David Miliband will be received by Prime Minister Erdogan and meet with his Turkish counterpart Davutoglu.

Q November 5: Prime Minister Erdogan will hold separate meetings with European Commission Vice-President Jacques Barrot and Swedish Migration Minister Tobias Billstrom.

Q November 5: Prime Minister Erdogan will hold his weekly meeting with army chief General Basbug.

Q November 5: Turkey's Chief EU negotiator Egemen Bagis visits Greece. Bagis will be received by Prime Minister Papandreou.

Q November 5-9: The 25th session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of OIC (COMCEC) will be held in Istanbul.

Q November 8: Iranian President Ahmadinejad will come to Istanbul for the COMCEC meeting.

Q November 6: Foreign Minister Davutoglu will go to Paris on an official visit.

Q November 10: The government plans to take Kurdish "democratic initiative" to the parliament for debates.

TV News (NTV)

Domestic

Q Following the announcement of Prime Minister Erdogan that he will not get the swine flu shot, President Gul also said he does not want to receive the vaccine. The death toll in the swine flu outbreak climbs to 15, with four patients dying of the virus yesterday.

Q On Thursday, President Gul will visit the eastern Alevi-Kurdish majority city of Tunceli, and join the opening of the new academic year in Tunceli University.

Q Environment and health associations will apply to the Council of State (Danistay) to demand the annulment of a controversial regulation permitting the sale of genetically modified food.

World

Q President Obama has urged the Iranian government to "open the door," saying the US wanted a relationship based on mutual interests and respect.

Q A Milan court sentences 23 US citizens in absentia to several-year prison terms for the daylight kidnapping of a Muslim cleric six years earlier.

Q New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg is elected to his third four-year term.

